

Chapter 4.0

Urban Design

4.1 Introduction, Vision, and Planning Context

The urban design component of the Central Area Action Plan II encompasses the elements which would enhance the physical characteristics of the area's residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. The future vision for urban design in the Central Area is as follows:

Urban design represents the piece of neighborhood planning which addresses the livability, identity, and physical quality of the community. It does not fall neatly into empirical categories such as traffic level of service, demographics, economic market trends, or projected population and employment growth. As a component of each of the other planning elements, urban design complements, other plan recommendations for transportation, housing, land use, and economic development, while striving to define the Central Area's social, economic, and physical character.

The urban design recommendations promote higher quality of residential life, enhanced commercial business districts, and a reinforced sense of community identity. Urban design does this by being the piece of transportation planning which strives to make streets suitable for pedestrians, transit, and automobiles; the part of housing and land use policies which help determine the compatibility and sensitivity of new development with existing structures; and the element of the economic development strategy which adds the public amenities, landscaping, and overall identity package.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Past. As one of **Seattle's** oldest neighborhoods, the Central Area has a rich and diverse history of people and places. Developed near the turn of the century, the Central Area invokes a recollection of many things. It is known for affordable, in-city housing opportunities and its streetcar and **pedestrian** transportation network. Many also know of its legacy of Italian and Jewish settlement. However, the vast majority associate the **Central** Area with the roots of African-American homesteading and the fountainhead of Seattle's jazz entertainment industry. The Central Area also stands **out as** one of the neighborhoods hardest hit by national urban renewal programs of the late 1950s. and 1960s. These efforts to "redevelop neighborhoods" left many parts of the Central Area with dilapidated **buildings**, vacant lots, **and a lost** sense of community cohesion.

Present. Today, the Central Area strives to recover *from* urban **renewal**. New homes are being built, while older ones attract renovation. Commercial development has also returned, as evidenced by the activity at 23rd and Jackson. In addition, amenities, and neighborhood pride

have been reinvigorated through public investment in facilities such as the Garfield and Miller Park Community Centers and community-based projects like the Central Park Trail.

Future. Opportunities abound for enhancing the physical, social, and economic characteristics of the Central Area. The challenge will be to ensure its citizens demand that public and private investment consider the following urban design goals and objectives:

- . Promote a consistent vision for land use, economic development, and urban design.
- , Encourage “pedestrianism” where people will walk in their neighborhoods and have the facilities that support the activity.
- . Define and reinforce the identity and character of individual Central Area neighborhoods.
- ., Respect historic and cultural resources, and make them important aspects of the community.
- . Provide appropriate facilities and investment for Central Area streets.
- . Identify and seek out opportunities for community spaces.
- . Ensure compatible new residential and commercial development through design guidelines.

UNRESOLVED / PENDING ISSUES

While the neighborhood planning work for urban design has accomplished much in terms of establishing recommendations, the following issues have not been resolved or await disposition:

- **12th Avenue Development Plan.** A decision must be reached on how to incorporate uncompleted recommendations of this 1992 adopted plan. Additional public investments are still desired, and its neighborhood specific guidelines for mixed-use development (which need minor amendments) have not been adopted by the Seattle City Council.
- **Union Street Urban Design Plan.** The Central Neighborhood Association is undertaking an urban design study for Union Street outside the scope of the Central Area Action Plan II. Once they complete their study, they are intended to be incorporated in this plan by existing reference.
- **Mini-Design Review Process.** In all likelihood, a number of other Seattle neighborhoods will raise similar issues regarding non-threshold projects that escape citywide design review (i.e., single-family housing, low-density townhomes). As more neighborhoods request review of non-threshold projects, a coalition “must be built to gain acceptance of or more specifically tailor the proposed “mini-design review” process.
- **Historic and Cultural Resources. Reference to the CAAP housing maintenance work has been included in this chapter.** However, the scope of this work did not include supplementing the inventory, recommending historic building designations, or covering commercial properties.

Sections 4.2 through 4.5 provide the range of **urban design** recommendations for the Central Area. To provide an understanding of how the urban design components cross through several of the other plan elements, plan cross references have been indicated where applicable, most particularly for the integrated plan activities in Chapter 2.0. The overall goal for urban **design**:

OVERALL Support the development of mixed-use, economically vibrant, and pedestrian-friendly Central Area neighborhoods by identifying pedestrian capital improvements; establishing a sense of identity for the entire district and individual neighborhoods; protecting historic and **cultural** resources; **identifying** and developing a **range** of open space opportunities (refer to Land Use; Chapter 3.0); and creating Central Area design guidelines to ensure **compatibility** between new commercial and residential development with the **Central Area's** existing built environment.

4.2 Central Area Design Guidelines

ACTION Ensure that new **infill** single-family, multifamily, commercial, and minor institutional developments remain compatible with and sensitive to the existing form of the individual neighborhood as a whole, with particular attention to nearby structures. Guidelines and solutions are needed for “tall and skinny” units, respecting existing building setbacks, promoting pedestrian qualities for commercial, multifamily, and mixed-use **projects**, and establishing positive developer incentives for implementing guideline recommendations. The Design **Guidelines** are published under separate cover, but are incorporated hereby reference.

UD-4.2.1 Residential Development Design Guidelines. Prepare guidelines to address the following qualities and provide specific detail for a sub-planning area (refer to Figure 17 on page 38), as necessary:

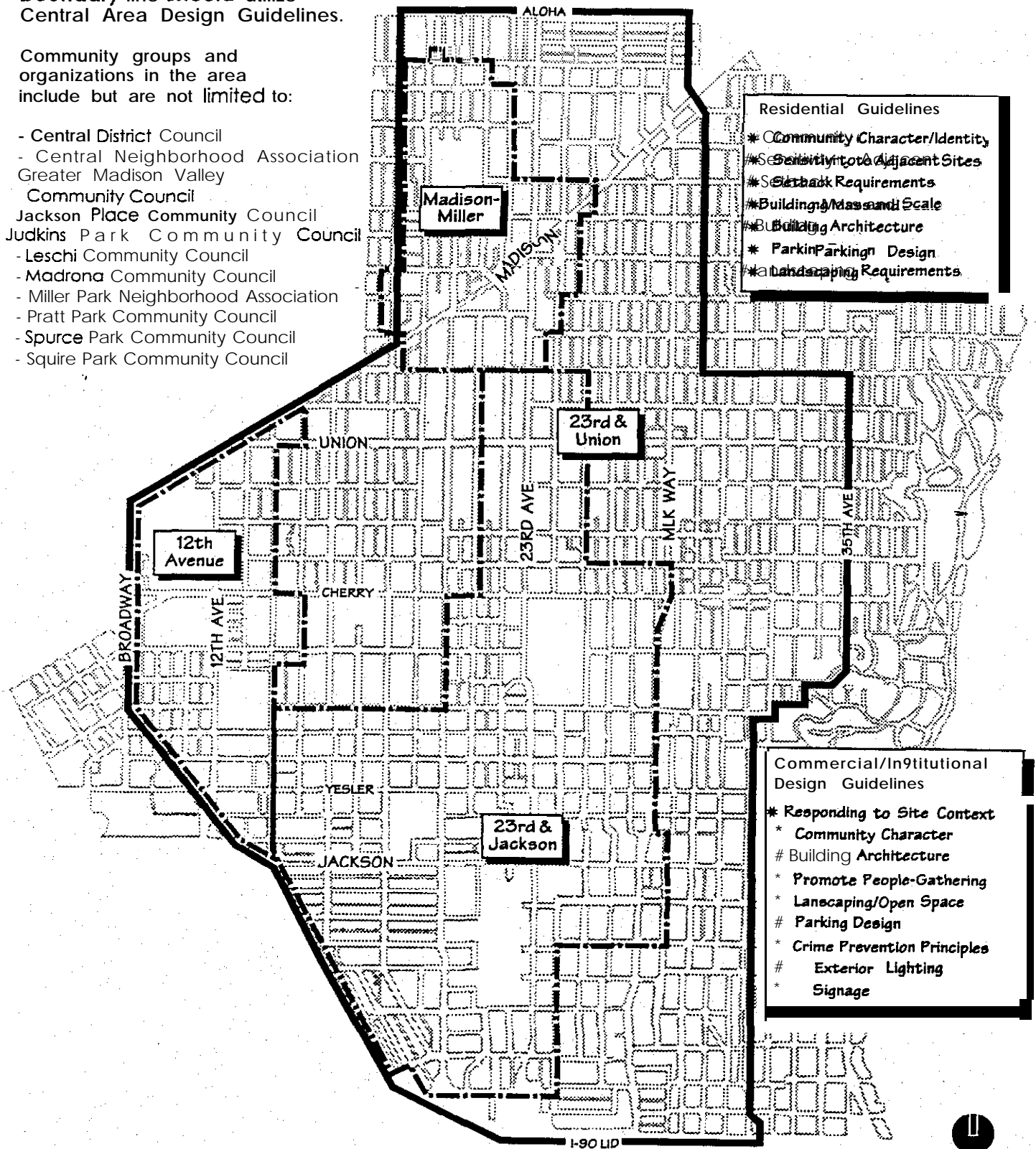
- “Community Character/ Quality
- Sensitivity to Adjacent Sites
- Setback Requirements
- Building Mass and Scale
- Building Architecture
- Parking Design
- Landscaping Requirements.

UD-4.2.2 Commercial/Mixed-Use/Minor institution Development Design Guidelines. Prepare guidelines to address the following qualities and provide specific detail for a **sub-planning** area (see examples Figure 18, page 39), **as** necessary:

Projects within the planning boundary line should utilize Central Area Design Guidelines.

Community groups and organizations in the area include but are not limited to:

- Central District Council
- Central Neighborhood Association
- Greater Madison Valley Community Council
- Jackson Place Community Council
- Judkins Park Community Council
- Leschi Community Council
- Madrona Community Council
- Miller Park Neighborhood Association
- Pratt Park Community Council
- Spruce Park Community Council
- Squire Park Community Council



CENTRAL AREA

A C T I O N P L A N I I



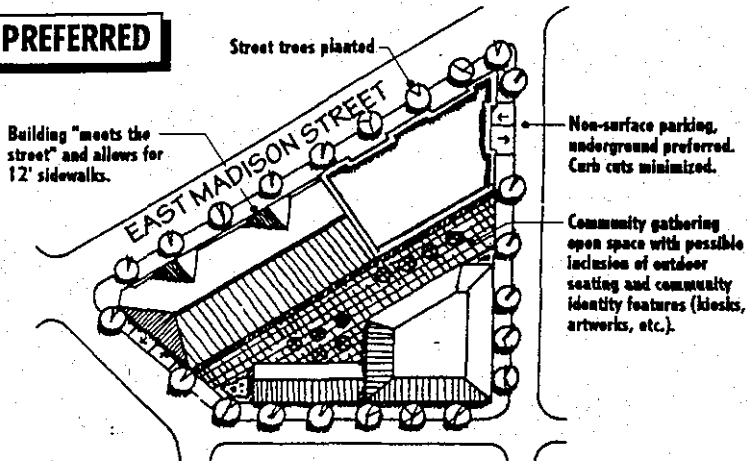
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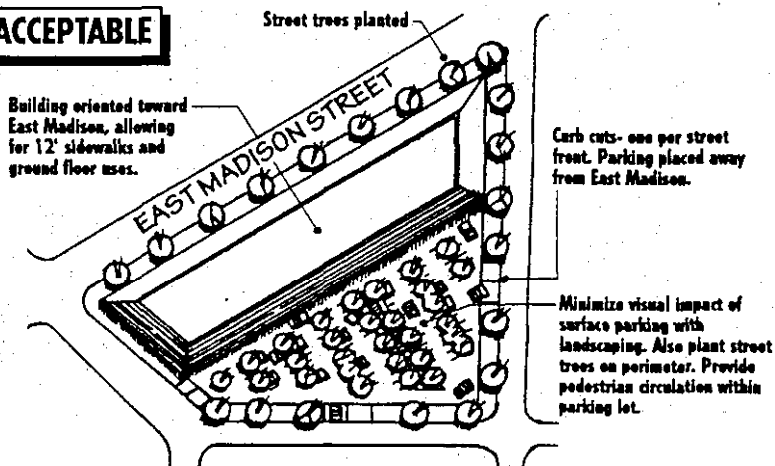
Figure 17
Central Area Neighborhood
planning Boundaries

Site Planning

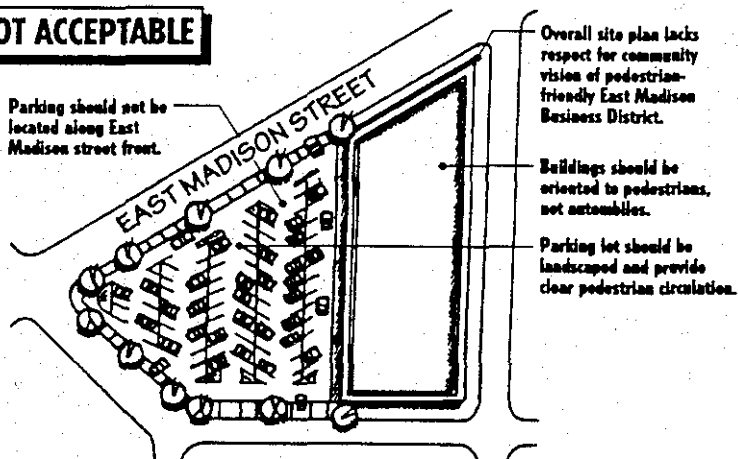
PREFERRED



ACCEPTABLE



NOT ACCEPTABLE



Storefronts and Streetscapes



Seattle, WA- Madison on First Hill

▲ Outdoor uses, pedestrian sites, trees



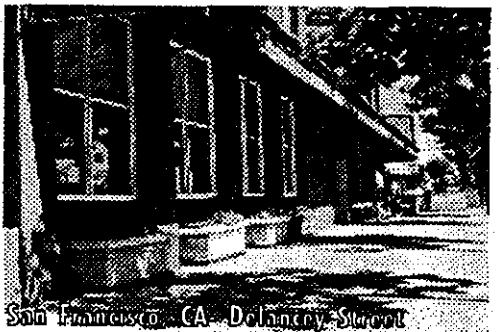
Seattle, WA- Fremont Avenue

▲ Pedestrian signs, building use connects to street



Los Angeles, CA- Crenshaw District

▲ Trees, interesting entries, large windows



San Francisco, CA- Dolanby Street

▲ Large windows, awning, planters, trees

- Responding to Site Context
- Consideration for Community Character
- Building Architecture
- Promote People Gathering- Site Amenities and Furnishings
- Landscaping and Open Space Requirements
- Parking Design
- Crime Prevention Through **Environmental** Design Principles
- Exterior Lighting
- Signage

UD-4.2.3 **Implementation.** Work with the, Seattle Department of Construction and Land Use to **design** and develop a program for assisting developers understand the aesthetic and compatibility preferences for non-threshold projects. These include single-family homes in **SF5000** zones, low-density multifamily projects **in LDT**, **L 1**, **arrd L2** zones, **and** minor institutions. The goal of this review is two-fold: to increase **design** compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood and to provide code flexibility and streamlining that encourages more affordable housing. ➔

4.3 Streetscape Improvements

ACTION Promote capital improvements that will encourage “pedestrianism” **among** residents, employees, and shoppers. Use all area streets and **sidewalks as** avenues to walk to, work, school, recreational facilities, shopping districts, and visit neighbors. **Identify** key **pedestrian** streets and **areas** where neighborhoods can be linked together. Refer to specific actions within Transportation, Chapter, 7.0.

UD - 4.3.1 **Key Pedestrian Streets.** Designate the following street sections as areas of priority for pedestrian-oriented capital improvements that may include but would not be limited to painted crosswalks, curb bulbs, special paving, new signals, bus stop plazas, street trees, and bicycle routes. Designations of **individual** streets are made in the Transportation section of this plan, and have also been incorporated as part of the Integrated Plan Activities chapter.

UD-4.3.2 **23rd Avenue Corridor.** Designate the stretch of 23rd Avenue from Madison Street to the **north** to Jackson Street to the south, as the **arterial** “backbone” of the Central Area, promoting the following elements:

- Street parking (limited segments) with restrictions during peak-hour travel. Consider instituting a demonstration project between Cherry and Union.
- Opportunities for green spaces, where **feasible**. These **could** include **temporary** improvements on vacant parcels **until** development occurs, youth artworks similar to those previously used at 23rd & Jackson and 23rd & Union parcels, pea-patches, or permanent open space acquisitions.
- More pedestrian-oriented uses (coordinate with land use concepts).
- Establishment of a Central *Area* heritage trail with interpretive kiosks, artworks, **community** bulletin boards. Use 23rd and adjacent side streets.
- Creation and installation of public art pieces.

4.4 Historic Resources

ACTION Recognize the historical importance and significance of the Central Area's **single-** family residential housing stock, institutional buildings (old schools, etc.), and commercial structures as community resources. Incorporate their elements into **building** design guidelines, housing maintenance programs, and possible designation of historic **and** cultural resources.

UD-4.4.1 **Building Design Guidelines.** Ensure that historic elements of Central Area homes and commercial structures (where appropriate) are referenced and considered. Do not require new buildings to mimic **older** homes, but rather complement them **with** compatible **building** features, types, and forms.

UD-4.4.2 **Housing Maintenance Programs.** Utilize the survey of historic resources in **the** Central Area, prepared in 1990 and partly **updated in** 1997, to promote housing maintenance and rehabilitation **programs**. Review the survey **to** consider possible individual designations of National Register of Historic Places nominations, and work with the property owner to proceed. Continue to work with the Department of Neighborhoods' Urban Conservation Division on this issue.

UD-4.4.3 **Commercial and institutional Structures.** Request that the City conduct a historic resources survey of commercial and institutional structures throughout the Central Area **planning** boundary. Ensure the work covers the commercial nodes of each planning area. Specifically, denote key African American landmarks that currently **exist** or have been demolished or hidden by other facades, including the Black and **Tan**, AME Church, the Deane's **Grocery** brick building, and the Hearing, Deaf, & Speech Center.

4.5 Gateways- Public Art and Entry Statements

ACTION Celebrate the Central Area's culture, heritage, and diversity of people and places by seeking opportunities for community-based public improvements that **would** create a sense of **identity**, establish pride of place, and enhance the overall image of the Central Area. Build upon the **CAAP's recommendations** for art and entry statement markers. To implement proposals, projects for public art and gateways **shall** be coordinated by the Central Area's **African** and African American Cultural Arts Commission.

UD-4.5.1 **Theme and Identity.** Various theme and identity concepts mentioned by the community-at-large through the course of neighborhood planning include:

- Central Area Jazz and **Entertainment** History (Jackson and Madison).
- **Madison** after Dark (to promote area's history as entertainment hub).
- Central Area African-American Pioneers.
- Heritage Trail to link the economic hubs along 23rd Avenue.
- **African** and African American Cultural Arts

Theme and identity can play a role in building development, **community** gateways, public **artworks**, and other community-based projects. Theme and **identity should** be a complementary piece rather than a driving force in the development of new projects, public infrastructure investment, and **community-directed** improvement efforts.

UD-4.5.2 **Identification Program.** Work with the City to establish a **signage**, banner, and/or kiosk **program** in the Central Area that identifies various neighborhoods and key landmarks. "10/0 For Art" set-asides should be included for every public **facilities/infrastructure** investment made in the Central **Area**.

Gateways should have a hierarchy, **with** major markers placed in the traditional entry points of the Central Area. The identification program components should be located at the entry points and within each of the major planning areas of **Madison-Miller**, 23rd & **Union**, 23rd & Jackson, and 12th Avenue. Appropriate locations have been mapped on Figure 19. Where existing master plans, **streetscape** plans, or other **local** plans have specific recommendations, those plan concepts **should also** be implemented. Relevant planning **efforts** include but are not limited *to*:

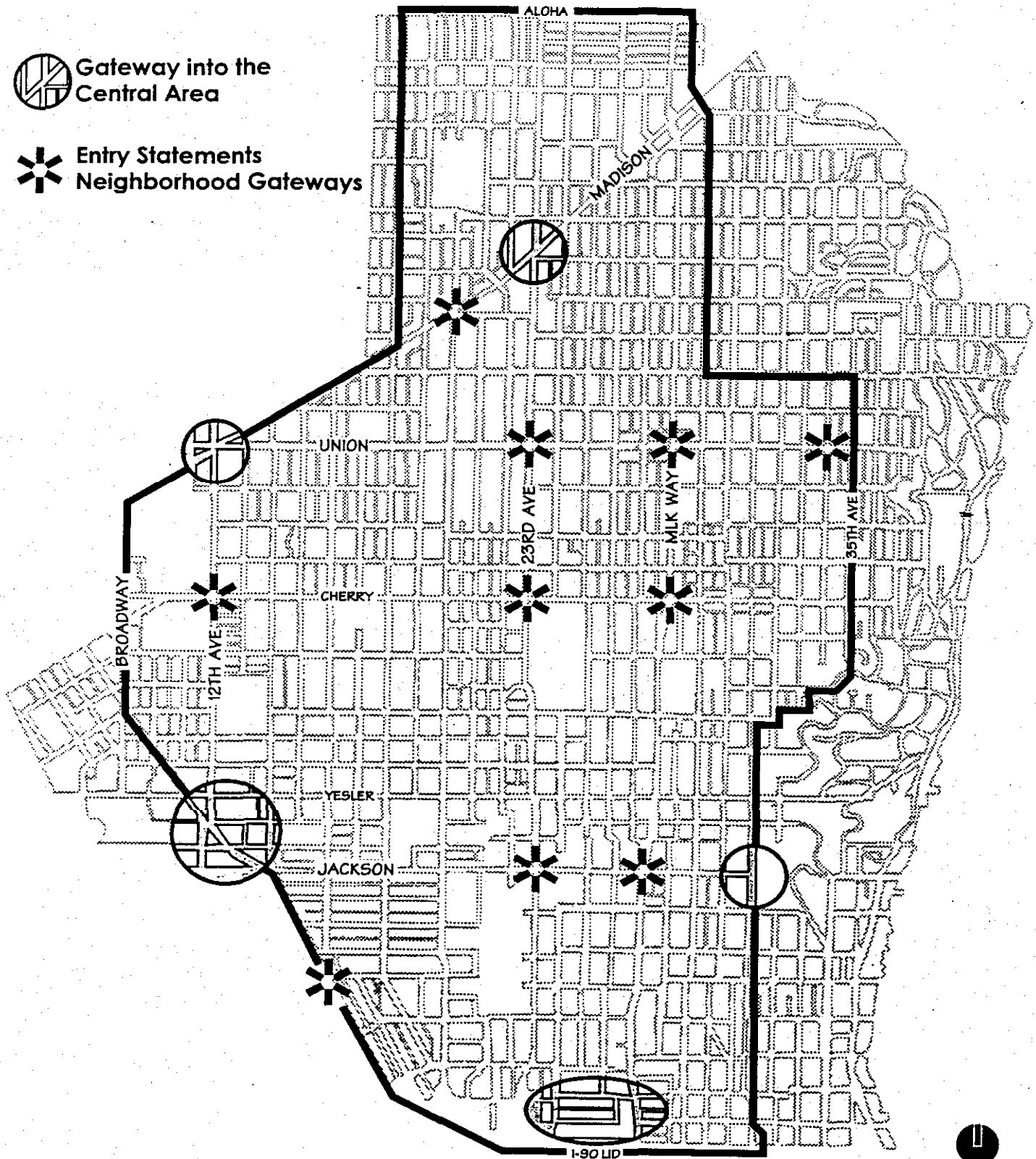
- **CAAP** Recommendations
- **Madison-Miller** Neighborhood Master Plan
- 12th Avenue Development Plan
- Jackson **Streetscape** Improvement Study
- Union Street Urban Design Plan (to be completed)
- Central Park Trail Master Plan



Gateway into the
Central Area



Entry Statements
Neighborhood Gateways



NO SCALE

CENTRAL AREA

A C T I O N P L A N I I

Figure 19
Central Area Gateways

- UD-4.5.3** **Public Art.** From both public and private development projects, seek funding for public art created by local Central Area artists that interpret the themes and identity of a neighborhood.
- UD-4.5.4** **Cultural Facilities and Amenities.** When feasible, build strong neighborhood cultural facilities that reflect the values and cultures of the Central Area community, serving as beacons of community pride.’ Build upon efforts in the CAAP that created partnerships with Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, Seattle Arts Commission, and the Seattle Police Department for site purchases, community events, and special programs. Incorporate elements established in the Human Development Chapter as well.
- UD-4.5.5** **Gateways.** Create a sense of entry for the Central Area and individual neighborhoods by developing “community gateways” that go beyond placing a sign on a utility pole. Develop landscaped areas, public art pieces, banners, and/or signage at locations that include but may not be limited to:
- **12th & Madison-** linking to Pike/Pine from 12th Avenue neighborhood.
 - **12th & Yesler/Jackson “Central Gateway” Project-** linking the communities of the Central Area, International District, First Hill, and North Rainier
 - **23rd & Madison-** linking to Capitol Hill
 - **23rd & Union-as determined** through Union Street project sponsored by the local Central Neighborhood Association urban design study.
 - **23rd & Jackson-** building on elements in the Jackson Streetscape Plan.
 - 、 **23rd & 1-90 Lid-** linking to Rainier Valley
 - 、 **MLK & Union or Cherry-** coordinating with median project
 - 、 **MLK & Jackson-** coordinating with median project